



United States Embassy Nairobi
Public Affairs Section
American Reference Center

United Nations Avenue
P. O. Box 606, Village Market
00621 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 254-20-3636196/7
Fax: 254-20-3636501

Peace Corps Volunteers Worldwide Improve Water and Sanitation

WASHINGTON D.C. March 22, 2013—In honor of World Water Day, Peace Corps recognizes volunteers around the world who making a difference in their communities by improving access to one of life's necessities: clean water.

World Water Day is held annually on March 22 focusing attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The United Nations has also designated 2013 the **International Year of Water Cooperation**.

Volunteers work with local governments, clinics, nongovernmental organizations, and communities at the grassroots level, where the need is most urgent and the impact can be the greatest. Many volunteers focus on outreach, social and behavior change in public health, hygiene and water sanitation.

Other water and sanitation projects undertaken by Peace Corps volunteers include:

- Tapping springs, constructing wells, and building latrines
- Improving or constructing potable water storage and distribution facilities
- Conducting community outreach to heighten awareness of water, sanitation, health, and environment issues
- Strengthening technical and management capabilities of local water communities



Kenya

Peace Corps volunteer Shailah Bevan of Aiken, S.C., worked with her Kenyan community to build improved latrines at two schools that will benefit more than 1200 students. Previously, the students were using latrines that were nearly full, unsanitary and made of rotting planks. Both schools have two new latrines – one for boys, and one for girls. Each latrine has a molded concrete seat, and is ventilated using plastic tubing. They also have solid double iron walls, a door with a lock and a sturdy roof. The project was completed with the help of parents who voluntarily dug 25 foot deep pits, mixed the concrete, constructed the exteriors, attached the doors and installed the ventilation pipes.

Cambodia

Peace Corps volunteer Neysa Peterson of Avon, Ind., worked with her Cambodian community to build a well to supply clean water to approximately 1,300 students and 50 staff members at a local high school. Previously the school relied on two unsanitary ponds for water. The well gives the students access to clean water to drink, wash their hands, fill the school's toilets and use in their small gardens.

Costa Rica

Peace Corps volunteer Kevin Werner of Minneapolis, Minn., has built a capture dam to supply water for more than 1,000 people in his Costa Rican community. The capture dam will collect water before it enters the aqueduct and then flows through the community's pipes. The capture dam will provide a reliable source of water through heavy rains and flooding in addition to increasing water pressure and helping to prevent water shortages. Twenty-five community members helped Werner to haul bags of sand and cement and clear the stream of rocks in order to set the frame for the dam.

"Having many of these young people involved in the process has elevated their interest in critical community volunteerism and will surely ease the process of attracting support for future projects. I hope the next time they turn on a faucet they feel a little pride at seeing clean water come out, knowing they helped make it happen," said Werner.

Georgia

Peace Corps volunteer Kelley Gallagher of Youngstown, Ohio, has refurbished three bathrooms and the kitchen of a school in Georgia which provides more than 200 students and 23 staff members with access to working sinks and toilets. Three new toilets and three new sinks were installed, as well as replacing old pipes throughout the building. Prior to this project, the pipe that carried water to the second floor of the school was broken, and teachers had to carry water up the stairs in order to clean up messes and dispose of waste.

"It really has made a huge difference to the quality of the care for the children at the school. This project has been one of the most tangible and important things I've done in my community. It's something that I know, with 100 percent certainty, made people's lives better," Gallagher said.

Peru

Peace Corps volunteer Vivaan Nehru of Bethesda, Md., is working with Peruvian community members to improve the hygiene and sanitation of his village through the installation of bathrooms and sinks in 40 family homes. Community members provided the manual labor necessary to install sewage connections and bathrooms with plumbing and running water. With assistance from nurses and community officials, Nehru conducted 12 educational sessions for interested participants. Topics covered throughout the sessions included hygiene, sanitation, HIV/AIDS, and proper nutrition.

"The starkest change has been felt by families with small children who had no access to shared latrines prior to the project," said Nehru. "Having access to a bathroom with running water not only reduces the likelihood of illness, but preserves and extends their safety, privacy and dignity."

About the Peace Corps: *Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps by executive order on March 1, 1961, more than 210,000 Americans have served in 139 host countries. Today, 8,073 volunteers are working with local communities in 76 host countries in agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health and youth in development. Peace Corps volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age. Peace Corps service is a 27-month commitment and the agency's mission is to promote world peace and friendship and a better understanding between Americans and people of other countries. Visit www.peacecorps.gov for more information.*

<http://nairobi.usembassy.gov/>